

THE REFORMER.

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Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. . . . Jeremiah, v. 1.

NEW PUBLICATION.

We have met with a pamphlet lately printed, containing *Remarks and Observations addressed to the travelling preachers* of the Methodist connexion; designed to show the impropriety of having so much power vested in the hands of their bishops, while no common or written law, or rule exists, by which they, or their particular agents, the presiding elders, (in the appointment of which the preachers have no voice) are made accountable to the annual or general Conferences, for their official acts. If, after such repeated calls and remonstrances to the rulers of this society, no regard is paid to them, we shall not be surprised, if the great body of the people and preachers, before long should secede from the present order among them, and leave the bishops and their agents, the presiding elders, to lord it over a very small heritage.

This pamphlet is without a signature, and no printer's name is affixed to it; for such arbitrary power exists among the principal rulers, that a person belonging to the community could expect no justice, if he raised his voice against their proceedings. Such an iron sceptre, awing people into subjection, is as contrary to the well being of the society, as it is to the principles of the gospel: for when the members of any community are chained down, and not allowed to speak out the sentiments of their minds freely, their rulers will act with more presumption, alienation of affection will ensue, and patience at length being exhausted, they will arise and shake off the trammels and restraints under which they have long groaned: after which, reconciliation can seldom or never be effected. We shall make a few extracts from the work, as here follow:

“The writer of these remarks is one of those theorists, who conceives that the love of power is so general among

men, that in any order of society, civil or religious, those who yield the principle of liberty will never want a master—and the doctrines he has embraced teach him, that the spirit of infallibility, is not given to church rulers; that the passions of men in official stations, do not become docile and inoffensive, in proportion, as legal checks, and restraints are removed;—and that there is infinite danger in trusting unlimited power in the hands of any man, or set of men.”

[After stating, that an absolute or unlimited form of government may be traced to the authority of a father in his own family, and showing at considerable length that this patriarchal or parental power and authority, (such as Mr. Wesley may be considered as possessing over the societies founded by his instrumentality,) cannot descend to others in a line of succession, inasmuch as parental affections are not transferable, and that the assumption of it by others is contrary to nature, and results in tyranny. He observes:]

“We would not call the father of Methodism, a tyrant, even if we could prove that he was not a good father; but though it should be demonstrated, that his parental affections were, to the utmost degree, pure, ardent, and impartial, yet we should feel infinitely hostile to the continuance or succession of his fatherly power.”—“Fathers may beget children, but those children cannot be fathers to one another. If a brother attempts to assume the authority of a father over his brethren, he embraces the principle of tyranny, by the very attempt. In so far as the founder of Methodism wished, (if he did wish) to perpetuate patriarchal authority in Bishops, he laboured under an error of the most disastrous consequence; for that germ of tyranny would be thus cherished in the church which has proved fruitful of oppression in every age.

“But what opinion can be entertained of those who can obtain their own consent, to accept of such paternal attributes? Do they really think that the office will create the affections necessary to qualify unlimited power? or, that it will engender in the bosoms of those whom they shall attempt to govern a correspondent degree of filial reverence? Fatal mistake! They will prove to their sorrow, little else in their administration, than a

struggle with the repulsive disposition of the human heart; 'Paul I know, and Jesus I know, but who are ye!' In vain shall they rely upon nature or grace to originate natural or gracious obedience, to unnatural and ungracious authority.—No man but a proper father has any right to exercise unlimited authority in the Church. Legal checks are necessary for the preservation of religious liberty. Say you that you govern after the manner of the Apostles; O! say not so. It would be tyranny in you to do as the Apostles did, as much as it would for you to do in another man's house or family, just as he does. There can be no equality between parents and children, but as soon as children become independent of parental authority, they have a natural and inherent right to enter into a state of equal society among themselves. Parents have no right by their last will and testament, to entail sovereignty on some of their children, and slavery on the rest. In this respect, God be praised, men are born free.

"The New Testament abounds with the soundest social principles and maxims; but as it regarded the Apostles, they did not go into operation in their full extent, by reason of the plenitude of their apostolical authority, which we have seen was a species of the patriarchal. We behold in their case, the family in the life time of the parents. Their practice of course resembled more the management of children than the proceedings of equals, ministering justice among men under circumstances of equality. All the advantage of age and experience, as well as of inspiration, were on the side of the Apostles. They had no competitors, or equals in these respects. None could succeed to their circumstances, or to their work.

"Brethren, whenever you hear the advocates of unlimited power pleading as precedents, the acts, or the opinions of the founder of Methodism, or of any one else, do not suffer your minds to be beguiled by venerable names. Look steadily to consequences, and make your determination either to take a timely stand, or to submit to an endless succession of Right Reverend Fathers in God, or Popes, or Patriarchs. They will not indeed be lords primates of all England, nor bishops of Rome, nor of Constantinople: but, a change of title, or of resi-

dence, will not alter the nature of the office : it will be of the same class.

“ There was a time before the departure of our venerable patriarch,* that a hope was cherished, that after he should be taken from us no one would wish to see patriarchal power perpetuated among us by succession. But ever since the painful necessity was imposed upon us of yielding this fond anticipation, doubts have multiplied whether the full time for the forming of a constitution was yet come ; whether our views of rational religious liberty were yet sufficiently matured, and diffused for such a work. It is not enough for a people to will to be constitutionally free, they must know how to make, and to carry into effect a constitution, whose principles and provisions shall secure the rights and liberties of every member of the community. Our apprehensions upon this score will not yield in any considerable degree to evidence, until we shall begin to see Bishops blush at the idea of choosing masters for others, and elders shrink back with horror from an office in which they must rule over free men without their consent. As long as men can be found among us so devoid of the spirit of religious liberty, and so unrestrained by respect for public opinion, as to vindicate as matter of right, a power which makes men lords over God’s heritage, so long shall we find the attempt to make a constitution a hazardous one, and (should it succeed) the advantages problematical.—That want of taste for religious liberty, of which we have so many painful examples, and that facility with which men can be induced to take offices, over the heads of their brethren, whom they know would never submit to their domination, but out of love for the peace of the Church, is calculated to humble us to the dust. We hear the reproach, and are confounded. It is a mortifying consideration, that so many good men can really think they do God service by supporting a system which has not one amiable feature to recommend it.

“ Is there a man among us so blinded by self-love and prejudice, as not to perceive that the absolute and iron features of our government, are objects of general shame and scandal. The friends of liberty can see not only no shades of liberty, in our present plan of presiding eldership, but they can find no apology for it. They are lost

* Bishop *Asbury*, we suppose, is here alluded to.—*Editors.*

in astonishment when they observe Americans, who are born heirs to the inheritance of sacred liberty, voluntarily submitting to the condition of wretched slaves, and depriving themselves of the privilege of having a mere negative voice in the choice of their overseers. Ah! we have heard such like reproaches and sarcasms, till both our ears have tingled; they have preyed upon our vitals like a hectic. We have exclaimed in the feverish excitement, what infatuation has seized upon Methodist preachers! Is this state of things, this vexatious condition to be eternal! Considering that we are a new people, with little or no advantage from education, wealth, or splendid talents, it might have been supposed, that it would have been deemed a point of first-rate importance to make every part of our economy as unexceptionable as possible to an independent people, who glory in their zealous watchfulness of the principles of liberty: Not so; O ye reformers! who *believe that God's design in raising you up in America, was to reform the continent, and to spread scriptural holiness over these lands?* Think you that it is God's design to bring back christianity in these lands, and to place it again under a species of papal government, or power? Do not be alarmed at the name, if you are not afraid of the thing. This is a legitimate term, it means the power of a succession of fathers (so called) fortified by spontaneous constitutions, and laws confirmed by usage, and incorporated with the prejudices of education."

EDITORIAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is remarkable, that the present senior bishop of the Methodist Society, who is now so very tenacious of the unlimited power of the bishops, once withdrew from the general Conference, with James O'Kelly and other preachers, in consequence of the uncontrolled power vested in the bishops, in appointing the preachers at pleasure, without allowing them any appeal from the bishops to the Conference. Since he has become *a bishop* himself, his sentiments, it seems, have very much changed.

No less remarkable is the case of one, who was elected *a Bishop* at the general Conference of last year. On finding himself elected to this office, he began to stand up

for all the prerogatives of the bishops; and declared, he would neither execute nor submit to a resolution, passed by a vote of the general Conference, authorising the annual Conferences respectively to elect their own presiding elders; although the bishops were to nominate three for each one wanted, and the Conferences to elect out of the said nomination; hereby clearly manifesting, that the Conferences, so far as it depended on his administration, should have no voice whatever in the appointment of presiding elders; and that he, as it respected this matter, was determined not to submit to the decision of a general Conference; and the senior bishop supported him in the high ground which he took, in opposition to the vote of more than *two-thirds* of the general Conference. It has been understood, that the *Pope* himself, was bound to yield to a general council; but here we find *a bishop elect only*, had the assurance to declare, that he would not yield to the general Conference. We consider this a pretty bold commencement; but he began too soon, as the eyes of the preachers were opened to see his true character, and being not yet consecrated, they had sufficient resolution to resist with firmness, his high prerogative claims, and were about to protest against his consecration; when he took the alarm, and gave in his resignation, which was accepted by the Conference, and he was left to his former standing. Afterward, under the influence of the senior bishop and the presiding elder, in Baltimore district, and others of like mind,* by a strange manœuvre among the delegates from the south and west, a majority was gained the evening before the Conference rose, to suspend the rule for electing presiding elders four years. *Struggle for power*—even at the risk of the unity, peace and liberty of the ministry and membership of the society.

* If the senior bishop, and his subservient co-adjutors, continue pertinaciously to adhere to the high position they have taken, we should suppose, the general Conference, as a remedy, would elect no more bishops. It cannot be indeed expected, that the ministers and members of the Methodist connexion, will much longer submit to be deprived of their common rights and privileges, in defiance of the voice of justice and reason. If the society should do away their episcopacy, or be rent and divided into parties, will it not be chiefly owing to those, who support the high toned power and authority, so unreasonably contended for by the senior bishop and his pliable adherents? "To your tents O Israel!" if once proclaimed by a few leading men, may cause a separation as effectual and lasting, as that which took place in the time of REHOBAM; who foolishly resolved not only to rivet, but add to the chains which Solomon had fixed upon the Israelites. See 1 Kings xii, 16.

For The Reformer.

To the Editors.—The following communication has been written, with a view to convince some, and silence others, who applaud the *Friend of Peace*—while they reprobate *The Reformer*. If you deem it suitable, you will please to give it an insertion; if not, you need make no apology for declining it, but persevere agreeably to the light afforded you. Of the tendency of *The Reformer* to be useful, I have the fullest confidence:—I am only surprised, that such a work can find a door to escape from the press, though I have wished for years, that something of the kind might go forth.

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SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

After perusing twenty-one numbers of the “*Friend of Peace*,” and eleven of “*The Reformer*,” I was surprised to find, that such powerful and invincible arguments, founded on both divine and moral authority, and embracing the present and past experience of mankind, should be necessary, nay scarcely sufficient to convince this illuminated age, viz.

Friend of Peace. That brothers ought not to murder each other!

Reformer. That christians ought not to devour each other!

F. Peace. That christians and cut-throats are different!

Reformer. That lambs and wolves are not the same!

F. Peace. That fire and steel, oppression and tyranny, will never produce love and union, peace and security—the happiness of man.

Reformer. That, ambition and human learning, pride and splendour, will never produce meekness and humility, self-denial and heavenly mindedness—the religion of Christ.

F. Peace. That a house divided against itself, like christendom at present, cannot possibly stand.

Reformer. That if built on the sand, like the systems of men, it must assuredly fall.

What then is the light so much boasted of? and the religion so much admired?—Surely darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the people; who love it, and

therefore are the more easily imposed on by those renowned teachers and doctors of divinity, who artfully furnish them with *their systems*, instead of the *gospel*; in the same manner as legislatures furnish men with *swords* instead of *plow-shares*. Being thus blinded by their teachers, and armed by their respective governments, they go forth like so many firebrands of the earth, to decide their differences by the slaughter of thousands; while the clergy pray for their success, and sometimes go with them to the field of battle. Now, when such things pass for civilization and religion, if there is not a need of reformation, there *never* will be any occasion for a reformation. If the gospel is not designed to dispel such blindness, and do away such practices, I would wish to know what the gospel is designed for.

The clergy themselves will tell us, that the gospel is GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY; that we should "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;"—that "where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work:"—that "this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish." And that "the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Agreeably then to their own instructions, though contrary to their practice, the *Friend of Peace* and *The Reformer*, (thanks be to God,) have ventured forth, to convince men of the absolute necessity of a reformation. And who so much as the clergy, should be first in seconding their endeavours? Or who, except such beings as the "ONE OF MANY," but would blush to raise their heads in opposition to either of the aforesaid works; both having advanced truths and facts, of an important nature, and more than sufficient to prove to every candid person, that christendom, so called, is under strong delusion--a house of confusion, infested with gospel merchants, money changers, tyrants, robbers and murderers; exceeding in many respects, even those heathens whom they are attempting to convert.—To what? to systems of war and confusion, or to the gospel of peace and union? This is the important question to be decided: for nothing can be more laudable, than to endeavour to bring mankind into conformity to the pure and holy

precepts of the gospel of Christ. But when we see the want of real goodness and humility, manifested in those who go forth to spread their various systems in foreign parts, and how little conformed to true righteousness those are whom they proselyte, we are strongly induced to believe, that like those in our Saviour's time, who compassed sea and land to make converts to Judaism, they will be of no great utility to the cause of Christ, the souls of men, or to the peace of the world.

Nay, but, some will say, why couple the *Friend of Peace* with *The Reformer*? The Reformer finds fault with every thing: he is too severe and censorious:—Slowly—consider, *First*, that this has at least the appearance of a dark pharisaical objection. *Secondly*, that the same was said of most of the prophets who declared the truth to the people: Jere. xxvi. 8—24. *Thirdly*, that prophecy has long since foretold, that the time would come, when men would not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts would heap to themselves teachers, (such as would please them) having itching ears;* being covetous, heady, high minded; ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth; despisers of those who are good, yet having a form of godliness, while they deny the power thereof. And *Fourthly*, that you are commanded from such to turn away: 2 Tim. iii. 1—7 and iv. 3.

Permit me here to state, why it is, that *The Reformer* will be likely to meet with more opposition, than the *Friend of Peace*; although both are friends of peace, both reformers. The *Friend of Peace* has to encounter only the stream; *The Reformer* the fountain from whence it proceeds. The *Friend of Peace*, addressing people rather in a civil capacity, cites such truths and facts, as expose more particularly the barbarous conduct of legislatures, kings, princes, generals, &c. who appear to the multitude in their real form, such as they are;—Whereas,


* To such as approve of the *Friend of Peace*, while they condemn *The Reformer*, I would observe; *First*, that it is utterly impossible for men to live in peace under a corrupt ministry, who cause them to err and transgress the divine law. *Secondly*, that conviction, without reformation, will not terminate in peace and salvation, but in judgment, and destruction. *Thirdly*, that it is folly to expect peace without reformation, than which nothing can be more disagreeable to a proud, interested, and pharisaical clergy.

The Reformer, addressing the people in a religious capacity, is obliged to cite such truths and facts, as expose the hypocritical conduct of the great body of the clergy; who appear to the generality of mankind as the ministers of righteousness; such as they are not. Thus we see, that *The Reformer* has a double task to perform; for when, like the *Friend of Peace*, he has convinced the people of what is wrong,—that they are in a deluded and degenerate state, &c. he has a still greater task before him: to convince them whence that wrong, that delusion and degeneracy proceeds; the fountain head of which must be purified or dried up, or else people refrain from it, before they can possibly become right: as they must become right, before they can do what is right: to effect all of which is attended with a great deal of difficulty. *First*, because error is sweet to the carnal appetite. *Secondly*, they have been so long accustomed to it, that they can relish nothing else.* *Thirdly*, they love to receive it from a splendid ministry, standing in the *holy place*. And *Lastly*, most people will sooner take offence, than receive instruction; and are naturally inclined to abuse those who unfold to them the “mystery of iniquity,” whether they be the prophets of old, Christ and his Apostles, or *reformers* of late.

Indeed, what success dare we promise the *Friend of Peace*, so long as people resort to the intoxicating fountain of a degenerate priesthood, and drink the venom of death, instead of the waters of life? He may convince them that things are wrong; that they are deluded or intoxicated: all which like common tiplers they may be brought to confess, nay even lament one moment, and swallow the intoxicating draught the next; especially, if not warned, and made sensible by *The Reformer*, of the corrupt fountain whence it proceeds. This, Lucifer well knows, and therefore he will, in all probability, raise

* The Saviour said to the Jews, when they complained that his disciples did not conform to the maxims and usages which had been long among them; “No man having drunk old wine, straitway desireth new: for he saith the old is better.” It is perfectly natural for people to be fond of what they have long been in the practice of; and it is with great difficulty, they can be brought to relinquish it. The Jews, converted to christianity, were all zealous for the ancient usages and rites of that people, and were quite clamorous against the Apostle Paul, for not enforcing them upon the Gentile converts.—*Editors*.

up many more adversaries against *The Reformer*, than against the *Friend of Peace*. For he is sure, if he can keep the WHITESMITHS a going, they will keep the BLACKSMITHS employed; and men may endeavour to reform until they are tired: only let the people have a proud pharisaical clergy to instruct them, nothing will be effected; whether they preach creeds or systems, law or gospel, peace or war—Satan is easy: for he well knows, that while they are averse to the meek spirit of Christ, and live in pride, they will only make those whom they proselyte two-fold more his children, by inspiring them with their own spirit, and bringing them into a state more incapable of any true reformation, than that of publicans and harlots. Natural men, being unable to discern spiritual things spiritually, can never preach the gospel of Christ in power; though they may be very learned, and speak with great fluency—bringing many into the pale of a Church, and fancy that they do much good, &c. &c. Such ministers, beyond all other men, hinder the progress of truth and righteousness in the earth; and when they are exposed, Satan is roused, his agents alarmed, and reformers accused of turning the world upside down. They must not, however, be deterred from proceeding in their work; for while these head quarters of Belial remain unmolested, darkness will reign. As long as Jezebels are counsellors, the passion of Ahabs will be indulged, and Naboths be destroyed, under pretence of zeal to God, for the sake of their vineyards.

Such then is the light, and such the religion; such the darkness, and such the stumbling blocks! The light is neither *clear nor dark*, but a false affected glimmer, resembling portentiously, the awful day foretold—Zech. xiv. 1—6. The light in which too many professing christianity in this day affect to appear, just enables infidels to see they are not what they pretend; that their god is gold, their religion gain; their doctrine darkness; and that they themselves are the stones and stumbling blocks, against which the Lord will ere long rear his standard, as in the call: “Go forth!—go through the gates!—prepare ye the way of the people!—cast up!—cast up the high way!—gather out the  STONES!—lift up a standard for the people!”—See *Isaiah*, lxii. 1—10. Up

then ye saints, go forth ye *Reformers*, and proclaim against each and all those idle shepherds, who feed themselves, but neither pity nor feed the flock. For their fate is declared—Zech. xi. 17. ‘The sword shall be upon their arm, and upon their right eye: and their arm shall be clean dried up, and their right eye be utterly darkened.’ Their arm of flesh, i. e. secular power, in which they trust, will wither away, and their right eye, i. e. spiritual and mental light and understanding, will be utterly darkened, like the Pharisees of old, who would not be instructed, nor amend, but opposed reformation on the brink of destruction.

O! christendom, christendom! If thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belong to thy peace—but now (I fear) they are hid from thine eyes; because, instead of watching and praying, instead of searching the scriptures, able to make thee wise unto salvation: instead of *proving all things, and holding fast that which is good*, thou art fancying thyself gathering grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles; thou art dreaming of a heaven at the end of the broad way; thou art placing a blind confidence in thy proud pharisaical shepherds; compared by Isaiah, to “blind ignorant, dumb dogs, that cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber:” that is, they apprize thee not of thy danger. They cannot bark, except at *Reformers*, when their craft is in danger. “Yea,” saith the prophet, “they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand;” they all look to their own interest, “every one for his gain, from his quarter.” Were they but to consider, that the flock will be assuredly required at their hand, that the Lord will enter into judgment with them, and they will have no way to flee or escape, they would tremble at the fate which awaits them, as Belteshazzar at the hand writing upon the wall.

ZERUBBABEL.

For The Reformer.

In the 7th page of the Episcopal Magazine for Jan. 1821, Bishop Watson is represented as having expressed himself, in the British Parliament, on the African Slave Trade, as follows:

“There is one short argument, if there were no other, which proves that slavery as such is not opposite to justice.

God cannot authorise injustice : but he did authorise slavery amongst the Jews ;* therefore slavery is not opposite to justice. Nor am I certain that slavery is any where forbidden by the letter of the New Testament."

After all, his lordship adds, " I abhor it"—slavery—" under every denomination."

Now, considering the high standing of Bishop Watson, not only in the Republic of letters, but in the Christian world, and that his reasoning, and assertions, as above, are circulated in a very respectable vehicle of religious knowledge, we think them entitled to a few remarks.

And, in *passing*, as the Bishop seems to view slavery in a favourable light—as consistent with *justice*, and sanctioned by divine authority, under the Jewish economy—and is not certain that it is forbidden by the letter of the New Testament—we are somewhat surprised that he should *abhor* what, if his own reasoning be just, God cannot *disapprove*. Indeed, from the syllogism the Bishop employs to prove that slavery as such is not opposite to justice, it would give us no additional surprise to see in some of his other speeches on the subject something like the syllogism that follows:—" God could not have authorised what he did not approve ; but God authorised slavery amongst the Jews ; therefore God *approves* slavery !!" By this concise method, if the learned Bishop's logic be sound, the lawfulness of war, offensive and defensive, might be established beyond controversy, and also the propriety of punishing by death idolatry, blasphemy, Sabbath breaking, &c. And we are not certain that concubinage and polygamy too, may not be defended, on similar grounds.

But, from a glorious change of dispensations, by HIM who is head of the church, and head over all things to

* *Note by the Editors.*—We are not aware, at present, of any particular passage in the Old Testament, where God expressly authorised slavery. Many, we know, who lived under *the law*, and previous to that time, and who were objects of the Lord's peculiar regard, had men servants and maid servants: but it is equally certain, that they also had a plurality of wives and concubines. The existence of the fact, or the Lord's suffering such things, we conceive widely different from his authorising them. Were it, however, even the case, that the Lord did authorise slavery among the Jews, the reasoning in this communication, we consider as conclusive against its continuance under the gospel dispensation, as well as various other usages actually authorised of the Lord among that people.

the church, those ancient usages, *some* divinely sanctioned, and others *suffered*, to scourge and moralize a rebellious and stiff-necked people, are *abolished*; and not only opposite to both the letter and spirit of the New Testament, but regarded, we must believe, by all who have the mind of Christ, as wholly incompatible with the christian name.—New Testament writers assure us, that the Jewish sanctuary was a worldly one—that its ordinances were *carnal*:—and we are told by the prophet that the Lord “gave them statutes which were not good,” otherwise than as accommodated to an imperfect dispensation of his grace, and an extremely rude state of society. But, does it *follow*, because God, under the circumstances and for the purposes, which we have mentioned, sanctioned or *suffered polygamy---concubinage—punishment by death—slavery—and war—that* all or *any* of these things must consist with the glorious dispensation of the *gospel*, and a correspondently improved state of morals? Our Lord has answered this question: the following are his equally *authoritative* and *gracious* words: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” In these explicit and emphatical terms ZION’S KING abolished the law of *retaliation*.

He continues, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour”—one of thine own nation—a *Jew*—and hate thine enemy”—a *Gentile*;—“but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you.” What manner of spirit are those of who say, “*We will not have this man to reign over us?*” Or, rather, could our Lord’s new law of universal love, issue from any source below infinite benignity? This magnanimous—this *divine* law—crowns the royal head of its adorable enactor with transcendent glory! “The Lord reigns, let the people rejoice.” But, though to prevent the stones from crying out, we have not entirely held our peace, we shall now be silent, and wait, with reverence, on the Lord, who thus, by his holy oracle, proceeds;—“All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so

to them : for this is"—the *spirit* and *end* of—"the Law and the Prophets."

Who does not see that this single precept, deeply engraven, and uniformly and vigorously *operative*, on all human hearts, would banish, not only *slavery*, but every other iniquitous and violent usage, from the human family?

On the *whole*, admitting, what we are sure Bishop Watson, as a great and good man, would not, *could not* deny, our *Lord's authority* to abolish and enact laws in his kingdom, and that his commands, enforced by his own example, are obligatory on us, as his disciples, how are we to *enslave*—we would respectfully ask—how are we to *enslave*, not to say *kill*, either our friends or foes? Again. It does not require half the intellect, or half the erudition, possessed by bishop *Watson*, to perceive that slavery, or, involuntary servitude, has always been, and, from its very nature, must be maintained by *war* : but how, we would further inquire, can war, for this, or any other purpose, be waged by *christians*, consistently with our Lord's aforesaid, and following declarations : "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight : but now is my kingdom not from hence."

A FRIEND TO LIBERTY.

For The Reformer.

To the Editors.—If you think the following remarks worthy of an insertion in your valuable work, and will tend to open the eyes of some of those, who suppose many things are correct, for want of taking the trouble of judging for themselves ; by publishing them, you will oblige a constant reader and subscriber.

I observe in several news-papers, there has been lately a religious festival in this city, [*New-York*] by the Presbyterians, principally confined to emigrants from the New England States;—in order to celebrate the landing of their forefathers, or *Pilgrims* as they call them, at Plymouth ; which took place that day just two centuries ago.—Now as it regards the utility, in a religious point of view, of commemorating epochs of this kind, I have my doubts ; but more particularly as it respects these

Pilgrims or settlers. For when we consider their conduct, and the conduct of their children to the poor Indians, the aborigines of the country, and the spirit of persecution which they evinced towards those who differed from them in religious principles, we are very much at a loss to know, in what point of light to view them. On their first landing, the natives afforded them hospitality and protection; entered into treaties with them, and placed in them the utmost confidence. After this conduct on the part of the natives, they had a right to expect from the settlers in return kindness, and a fulfilment of that which they had pledged themselves to do: and, as followers of Christ they should have cultivated a peaceable disposition towards these uninstructed people, and on all occasions, have set them an example, of “doing to others, as they would be done by;” and thereby recommended the religion they professed. But sorrowful to relate, the Indians found their confidence abused, their rights disregarded—and will it be believed, *these Pilgrims* and their descendants, these men who had left Europe on account of religious persecution, and committed themselves to the mercy of the waves, to seek an asylum on these shores where they might enjoy their faith unmolested: will it, I again repeat, be believed—that these men and their children, by inroads and encroachments made upon the poor ignorant natives, at length involved them in difficulties and war; and then, while professing to be the followers of a meek and crucified Saviour, resorted to every means in their power, (not excepting fire and sword) for their complete extermination; when, at the very time they had ten-fold more right to the soil than themselves. That this was the case, the early history of this country will abundantly show.

But this is not all, for we find as the colony increased, these men who had smarted under the lash of persecution themselves, (which it might be naturally supposed would have taught them a different lesson,) now having the power, commenced the same persecution against others of which they had complained, and on account of which they left Europe; and not only whipped and imprisoned numbers, whose religious sentiments were not accordant with their own, but actually hung, in the town of Boston, one woman and two men; because they

could not for conscience sake, abjure their faith.—I come now to the celebration of the festival.

At first a sermon is preached in the brick meeting-house, by the Rev. Mr. Spring; and in the evening there is a splendid supper at the City Hotel, at which were general Stevens, the Rev. Drs. Romeyn and Spring, Bishop Brownell, Com. Chauncy, Col. House, and others. From the statement made in the news-papers, they must have had a splendid time of it, indeed, *Ministers* and all:—such eating and drinking and making merry, as I never recollect to have read a precedent for in any part of our Saviour's doctrine, or in the precepts or practices of any of his disciples; nor indeed, among any denomination of christians, until they had almost, or quite degenerated from pure and vital christianity.

In order to heighten their glee, a band of music must be employed, which played "*Yankee Doodle*," "*Washington's March*," "*Grand March in Henry IV.*" "*Hail Columbia*," &c.—and among the songs sung, were "*Hail Sons of the Pilgrims*" "*Erin go Bragh*,"—and Glee, "*Oh, why to be happy.*" To these were added, frequent drinking healths and toasts: the whole of which, I conceive to be altogether repugnant to the spirit of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The account published, states: "The toasts, songs and addresses, on the occasion, were patriotic, appropriate, instructive and enlivening; and the society broke up at an early hour, highly gratified with the whole proceedings of the day."

I conclude, by observing, that a religious festival kept in this way, must in the estimation of every serious and reflecting mind, appear truly absurd and ridiculous; and cannot be otherwise, than an abomination to Almighty God. And how ministers, after attending at such a place, can preach against not being "conformed to this world," and direct their hearers to be "sober and watch unto prayer," I shall leave the reader to judge.

WESLEY.

Remarks by the Editors.

This centurial anniversary was celebrated at Plymouth, (Mass.) where the *Pilgrims*, so called, first landed, with much ceremony and parade. 'The morning,' it is

stated, was ushered in with military salutes. About eleven, the procession, under the escort of the Standish Guards, moved to the church for devotional exercises. Afterwards an oration was pronounced by the Hon. Mr. Webster. A procession was then formed to the new Town-House, where about 450 gentlemen sat down to an excellent dinner; at which, addresses and replies were made, and toasts drunk—and the festivities of the day terminated by a *ball* in the evening; which was attended by a great deal of fashionable company from Boston, in addition to the inhabitants of Plymouth.'

We do not wonder so much at the manner in which this festival was celebrated, in New England. The religion in those parts is of a peculiar characterestic; and in most places, *balls* are considered an innocent recreation, even for christians. But we had hoped, that people at New York, professing christianity, had more correct views of christianity, or more solid piety, than to attend at such a carnival, as the one described in the preceding communication.



FOR THE REFORMER.

To the Editors.—If Lyman Beecher's plans were to go into effect, as stated in your 10th number, of having a clergyman for every 1000 inhabitants; and their average wages were to be 500 dollars yearly, it would amount to as many millions of half dollars, as there are people in the United States: and then, what a vast sum would have to be expended, to learn them the trade. After all, what the better would we be. I think if we had a little of this money to lay out to get necessities for some of our poor neighbours, these hard times, or to make turnpike roads toll free, through our wilderness country, it would be putting it to a better use, than to make or support such mechanicks; and it would gladden the hearts of thousands that are labouring under great difficulties.—We have likewise many wolves in our wilderness, that make a prey of our sheep—they have need of a shepherd. And we ourselves also, have need of a shepherd; and where shall we find one that will care for us, and save us? The blessed Jesus informs us: "I am the good

Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.—But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.”—Again, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.”—“The thief cometh not, but for to steal [*pilfer something for himself*] and to kill, and to destroy [*kill religion and destroy the soul*:] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”—“I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine,”—“and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”

If these words of our Lord were well understood, and engraven on every heart, there would be fewer false ministers supported; and it would be better for mankind.

Centre County, (Pa.)

A NORTH-WEST WOODSMAN.

For The Reformer.

I have often thought that if a desire to know and to do the divine will, commensurate with that which the importance of the subject should at all times inspire, was sincerely and fervently indulged by mankind, there would be no great difficulty in convincing one another of the important doctrines relating to the kingdom of Christ. Neither would it consist with the wisdom and goodness of God to permit such to continue in any errors fatal to their own salvation, nor, in their tendency essentially injurious to their fellow heirs of immortality. I would not be understood as inculcating the idea that in the present imperfect state, entire uniformity, in either faith or practice, is to be expected. The true christian unity is not comprehended in the adoption of any precise creeds or tests, but in christian love. This however, is

not a mere name, nor that kind of charitable disposition (as some men reckon charity) which overlooks the faults and failings of others. It is, to use the language of the Apostle, a *drinking together in the same spirit*, or a *sitting together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. But although perfection of knowledge is not the lot of humanity, and therefore perfect unity of faith is not to be expected in the present state of being, a perfection of desire to know and do the Divine will is not only to be expected, but is absolutely necessary and indispensable. Nothing less than this perfection of desire can properly be called sincerity; and nothing less than this will be acceptable to the Divine Being who requires the devotion of the whole heart. And as this perfect desire to know and perform the will of God is what is most necessary, so, unhappily, it is what is most wanting among the professors of the holy name of Christ; and the want of this all-important disposition, is to me the strongest proof of the degeneracy of the present age. Was this desire prevalent in the minds of christian professors, how different would be the aspect of things among them? We should not see them indulging in practices adverse to their high and holy profession, merely because they were sanctioned by custom or participated in by others whom they had been induced to consider wiser and better than themselves; but despising the world's dread laugh, or the censure of singularity, they would take a firm stand in christian principle, in opposition to the current of custom, alike unconcerned with regard to popular praise or popular odium.* This is the only way in which reformation can ever be accomplished,

* *Note by the Editors.*—The principle inculcated in this communication, we would recommend to the serious consideration of every one. The path of duty is easy and plain. There is a law which God writes in the heart, ever present with us, to direct us what is right; and if every person would come to the full resolution always to *do right*, whatever it might subject him to, as regards the loss of interest in this world, a good name among men, or the denial of any thing that belongs to *self*, we should soon see a great change for the better on the earth. Where there is a want of this disposition of heart, there is a want of every thing which pertains to true righteousness before God; but whoever attains to it, will ensure the saving of his soul—which is more than all this world. Therefore, if our right eye, foot, or hand cause us to offend, it is better for us to part with it at once, however painful it may be to flesh and blood, than to delay it through any earthly considerations whatever:—“*for what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?*”

or true christian principle advanced. Each for himself must submit to take up the cross and deny himself of whatever is contrary to the laws and precepts of Jesus Christ. It is altogether futile to suppose that at any period mankind will all be convinced of truth, and simultaneously make a move for reformation. It is only by every one acting firmly according to the light with which God has favoured him, that we need ever expect this blessed work to progress in the world. The little stone which the prophet Daniel saw, in divine vision, cut out of the mountain without hands, gradually grew till it became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

May the Lord, in his infinite goodness, hasten this period, and strengthen the little that remains that is ready to die; that 'the nations may yet come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising.'

CHRISTOPHILUS.

Extravagance in Meeting-houses.

It is stated in a New-Orleans paper, that a meeting of the first Presbyterian Congregation in that city was held on the 2nd of Nov. at which time a committee was appointed to procure a Pastor to take the place of Mr. Learned, (who died last summer with the prevailing fever;) and also to petition the legislature for a loan in aid of the funds of the church. We suppose a loan is now much needed to pay for their expensive house of worship erected some time since.

This is not the only instance where pride or emulation has led congregations to involve themselves, by building splendid and costly meeting-houses.—A congregation in this city, not rich in funds, some years ago erected a very magnificent house for worship, and borrowed, as near as we can ascertain, in addition to what they could raise, upwards of 30,000 dollars; the interest of which, with the salary of their minister, has reduced the congregation nearly to a state of insolvency, and the stock of the money loaned, it is thought, would not produce to the owners at this time fifteen dollars on the hundred.--

Another congregation in this place a few years past, erected a house of worship, at the expence of about 17,000 dollars, which they have since had to sell for less than one half of the cost---making a loss to the congregation or society of upwards of 9,000 dollars. This we think is so far from *letting their moderation be know to all men*, as the Apostle directs, that it is causing their extravagance, coupled with poverty, to be known of all men. Before men begin to build, it would be well for them to consider our Saviour's advice, and *count the cost* ; lest they not only burden the congregation, but subject themselves to reproach.

[The following extracts from letters received, are not inserted with a view to sound forth praise, but to give the sentiments of candid and upright persons in regard to the tendency of the work; which we have been advised to lay before the public. In this instance we shall not object, considering the source from whence they have been derived, and the natural prejudice that must necessarily exist against such a work. But as much on this head would not be so suitable for us to insert, it is desired, that *in communications* hereafter, expressions of commendation may as much as possible be avoided, lest in omitting them the arrangement be interrupted.]

Extract of a letter from Lancaster County, (Pa.) to the Editors.

“I have just received by the mail, the first number of the second volume of The Reformer. I have carefully perused, and re-perused the twelve numbers of the first volume, and am perfectly convinced of the utility and necessity of the work you have undertaken. In a time like the present, when true religion is every where opposed and nearly banished from the earth, by selfish and worldly minded priests and bigotted professors, among the various sects and denominations of christians, so called ; it becomes every sincere lover of the pure doctrines of the blessed gospel, to stem the universal current of degeneracy and corruption, both by precept and example. You have made a bold, and I trust a firm stand, to oppose error and corruption, and to expose the artful machinations of the domineering priesthood ; and for your benevolent labours, to disseminate pure views of the gospel among the children of men, you will, no doubt, be requited with slander and defamation, and even perse-

cution by the sons of pride and error, ecclesiastical impostors and their duped and bigotted votaries. But you have nothing to fear; conscious of being engaged in the cause of truth, you can rely on the great Author of truth for his aid. Genuine gospel truth is a rock against which, our Saviour affirms, the gates of hell shall not prevail. Your sincere labours and endeavours to reform mankind, and win them over to their own eternal felicity, will not, they cannot be in vain: and all the opposition you may meet with, or which may be undertaken against the Reformer, by those who put darkness for light, and light for darkness, will only serve to open the eyes of the well disposed part of the community.—It is indeed amazing, to behold the alarming rapidity, with which false religion increases in the world; and it has the appearance, as if true piety would be totally exterminated. However, though the times very much resemble those of the prophet Elijah, in point of wickedness, (or perhaps exceed them,) yet I fondly hope and trust, that there are still a considerable number (unnoticed by the world, being in the wilderness,) who do not pay homage to the great Baal of the day.”

Extract of a letter from an aged and respectable minister of the Baptist Society, (Mass.) to the Agent of the Reformer.

“Through the medium of the Post-office I have regularly received the numbers of ‘the Reformer.’ So far, the work in general, has accorded with my views, of divine truth; and I feel grateful to my friend in Pennsylvania, for directing it to be sent to me; and also to the editors, for the noble stand they have taken in favour of pure and undefiled christianity. They must, however, expect opposition and persecution; but for this they are commanded to rejoice. “Correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way;” and “whosoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God;” for he requires faithfulness and truth. But the prophet tells us, they shall be “Like people, like priest;”—“Speak unto us (say they) smooth things, prophesy deceits,” and the honour and riches of the world shall be your reward.

“As to the *manner*—some sentences are objected to, and perhaps justly, as too acrimonious, considering the predominance of pride and guilt, which disqualify many from bearing as much as they otherwise would. The prime object of the editors, I doubt not, is to do good; and in seeking to accomplish this, I hope they will exercise all that christian candour and gentleness, which may consist with known duty: and may a divine blessing attend their endeavours to be useful to mankind.”

Adam Clark in his Commentary on 1 Cor. xii. chap. observes—
 “There is nothing good, nothing profitable to salvation, unless it be done in the power of God, communicated by Christ Jesus, and in that holiness of heart which is produced by his spirit.”

Says Kennitott, “And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted? or rather, if thou hadst done well, shouldst thou not have been accepted in the same manner as Abel thy brother? ‘And if thou dost not well,’ or hast not done well—‘sin lieth at the door,’ *the fault is thine.*”

“At a court of King’s Bench [England] October 23d, Jane Carlisle was tried on a charge of publishing two blasphemous and impious libels upon the Bible and the christian religion; the one in Sherwin’s life of Tom Paine, and the other in a paper called the Republican. The jury, without retiring found the defendant—Guilty. No motion was made for her committal.”

Mr. Carlisle, it will be seen in our third number, was sentenced to three years imprisonment, fined 15 hundred pounds and committed to Dorchester jail, for vend- ing Paine’s Age of Reason; and if we are not mistaken, Mrs. Carlisle has before been tried on a similar charge since her husband’s committal. If those who profess the christian religion in England, would live more according to the Divine principles of that religion, it would, we apprehend, have a better tendency to do away Deism out of the land, than any pains and penalties.

“A communication from Baltimore, signed “W,” shall be inserted in our next number.

N. B. We would again request if any miscarriages take place, or subscribers do not get their numbers regularly, that they will communicate the information as early as possible; for we would rather lose a whole package, or send it several times, than that one subscriber should be disappointed. The numbers which are sent by mail are generally all put in the Post-office at this place the 1st or 2nd day of each month, and subscribers may readily calculate about the time they should arrive.

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